{See Note at end.}

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IS A SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR RELIGION POSSIBLE?

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The whole wide field of the modern world is but one grand scenic display in illustration of the conflicts and conquests of science. Always has her flag led the way to victory; and no weapon turned against her has prospered.

It is not so long ago that this earth was the universe; while the sun, moon, and stars were only "appurtenances thereunto belonging." God, angels, and devils were chiefly interested in a struggle going on here, recently begun, soon to be ended, when time was to be no longer, and eternity was to become all. But science, like a young demiurgos, has touched, transformed, and re-created all things. And now we see "a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth" are "passed away." The word has gone forth, "Behold, I make all things new."

We talk to-day with a friend in a distant city as familiarly as two neighboring gossips used to converse with each other from opposite windows, across a narrow street. And, each new wonder becoming a commonplace in a week, we are apt to forget how very modern all these things are. So we lose the marvel of what science has done in two hundred years.

The little flat earth plain of the ancients, flowed round by the ocean stream, domed by a solid concave as real as the cover of a dinner-platter, ruled by Jehovah or Jove, covering a cavern peopled by the shades of the dead, a scene of magic and marvel, the battle-ground of deities, demi-gods, heroes and monsters of every kind,—all this is not so very far away. The "ancients" themselves were very modern, as compared with our present conceptions of the beginnings of life on earth. And Dante's world, a Christian crystallization of many preceding speculations, is hardly more than five hundred years old. While, even since Boston was founded, Milton wrote his great epic. He knew of the ideas of Copernicus; though, for the purposes of his poem, at any rate, he rejects them. His whole universe is not so large as the now known orbit of the moon.

So recently, then, has Science given us our present universe for a home. She shattered the crystal spheres of Ptolemy, and turned the "firmament" into "the blue dome of air." She set the stationary earth in motion, and sent it spinning about the sun. And now our earth, instead of being the centre, is found to be

only one little planet,—a subordinate part of one little system, itself a subordinate part of an infinite order. For our whole tiny group is so far away from even its nearest neighbor that a little fleet of yachts alone in the centre of the wide Atlantic, with no sign of life nearer than the far-off shores, could only faintly figure forth its startling isolation. It takes light about eight minutes and a half to reach us from our sun; while this same ray, in order to reach our nearest next-door neighbor outside our system, would have to travel about one million eight hundred and forty thousand minutes. And, even then, the white-winged messenger would only be standing on the threshold of infinity.

Is it any wonder that the science that has done all this should expect to change a good many things more?

But we need to glance for a moment a little nearer home than the stars, and obtain a glimpse, at least, of the extent to which science has changed the conditions of our daily life. Until very recently, men have postulated a miraculous origin for humanity only about six thousand years ago. The Garden of Eden has faded into the cloud-land of mythology; and science asks us to look down a vista of at least two hundred thousand years, to see our half-human ancestors cradled in a jungle, with the bestial cries of the forest for lullaby; and then to note how, with slow and painful steps, our race has struggled up a pathway wet with tears and blood to its present vantage-ground of civilization. And it is only in these recent years, by the help of this same science, that our race is gaining its conquest over the earth. Science found man timidly creeping along the river-banks and the ocean shores, shaping with clumsy hands and crude, flint implements a crazy "dug-out" in which to venture a little way over a sea peopled with monsters, and with all imaginable threatening horrors on every hand. She built for him the steamship, and turned the widest oceans into common ferry-ways. She found him toiling a few miles a day on foot or horseback or in some springless cart, and she built him the railway and the Pullman car. She found him sending a courier with a notched stick for a message to some other tribe, and she gave him the lightning for a post-boy, and turned the world into a whispering gallery. She found him living in little isolated and hostile groups, imagining the world beyond his narrow limits peopled with barbarians and monsters; and she gave him the printing-press, whose scattered leaves alight on every breakfast-table, and so gives us the sense of common interests, common wants, common sufferings, common aims, and a common brotherhood. Wherever the most careless eye rests to-day, it looks on some gift of this wondrous, omnipresent, all-conquering, all-generous science.

So much has this "science" thus wrought that we have come almost to look upon the word as though it stood for an entity, a demigod, a genie of some Aladdin's lamp. No wonder if the men of science are proud of the past! No wonder they hold the most extravagant views as to what the future may unfold. No wonder they borrow the feelings, if not the words, of him who sung the triumphs of steam, and sometimes say to humanity,

> "By and by, you may go and play,
> While I manage the world myself."

Is it to be expected that, in a world so transformed, any class of human ideas is to escape the general transformation?

The religions of the past, whether true or false, have been held on grounds that science cannot recognize. Hence the inevitable "conflicts" and "warfares," whose history and principles have been so ably, if not completely, set forth by such men as Dr. John W. Draper and President Andrew D. White. But the warfare of science has not been confined to the old religion as an antagonist. Science has also had to war against the old history, the old philosophy, and even against the old science. The fact of it is that bigotry and conservatism are not all in the Church. They are too human, and there is too much of them, to be shut up in any one enclosure. There can be a scientific bigotry as well as one that bears the label of Presbyterianism. Witness the attitude of all the older physicians in England toward Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. It is said that no one of them who had passed the age of forty

ever got his eyes open wide enough to see the new light. Witness the purely scientific authority of Newton, which eclipsed the glory of Young, as the discoverer of the true theory of light, for a century. Witness Agassiz and evolution. And the list might be indefinitely extended.

But because Science carries on her warfare against the old theories and supposed facts of history, philosophy, and science in the past, no one supposes that any one of these—history, philosophy or science—is to be slain, or must of necessity cease to exist. No false theory about the stars ever endangered the light of any single one of them. So it seems to me quite possible that false theories about religion, or the discovery that supposed religious facts are without foundation, may not hinder its continued career, any more than false theories about the earth are likely to hinder its continued circuit about the sun.

A little clear thinking and some good definitions ought to bring some help to those who do a good deal of ill-digested talking about science, as well as to a similar class that endangers religion by its unwise defense. Let us then try to get our bearings and find out just what it is that we are talking about. We will then examine the two great supposed antagonists, and see if we can find out what they are.

I. What is Science?

To hear people talking about it, you would suppose that it is a *thing*, an entity, that can be in favor of or opposed to some other *thing*. But science is only *man thinking*,—one of the functional activities of humanity, as religion is another of his functional activities. Instead of being a thing, it is only a *method* of dealing with things. It is the way—and, I believe, the only way—of rational study of the discovery of truth. I hold that no man ever did discover any truth, or ever will, except by the use of the scientific method. That men used this method before they thought of it, or formulated it, is nothing against this position. Men spoke grammatically before they formulated grammar; and they used their eyes for ages before they dreamed about any theory of vision. But men can use their eyes much more effectively, and can more easily distinguish between hallucination and reality, since they understand the laws of sight. So, since they have formulated the laws of investigation, they can make more rapid and sure advances in the discovery of truth.

What now is this method of science? It consists in three distinct and separate steps of investigation.

1. The first step is *observation*. This is the simple looking at a supposed fact. But the impression one gets from this first looking may be a quite erroneous impression. For the eyes alone may send up a false report to consciousness. The eye tells us that the earth is flat; that the moon is only a few miles away, and is no larger than a platter. Different eyes do not agree as to colors. A movement may be made so rapidly that the eye shall misreport it completely.

In a similar way, the reports of all the other senses are liable to be mistaken. It is not enough, then, to see a thing or hear a thing or feel a thing. The one testimony must be checked off by other testimonies. The report must be corroborated. So

2. We must take the next step, that of *verification*. To do this, we repeat the observation. We call in the aid of the other senses. We check off or modify one report by another. We compare them; we try to eliminate sources of error; we apply one method of explanation after another, until we feel reasonably sure that we have found the only one that is adequate. Then, for the first time, we have a right to say that we know that fact. Then

3. We are at liberty to take the next step, *deduction*. We have verified a large number of facts that are similar in their general characteristics, and we put them together in a class by themselves. Now, we have a right to go on and deduce a theory as to their relations to each other. And these constant relations we speak of as the law that underlies them, and by which they are what they are. This is what is meant by a scientific theory or hypothesis. And, if no new fact is discovered that our theory cannot make room

for or explain, as we say, then we consider our hypothesis established.

And, just here, we need to bear in mind another thing,—that what science speaks of as a law is not a thing or force or entity any more than science itself is. It is popularly spoken of as though it were a statutory enactment or a positive force that was capable of doing things. It is nothing more than our way of saying that the relations between certain phenomena are constant and are changing.

Now, then, after science has taken its third step,—deduced its theory,—its triumph is attained, and its power becomes manifest. Taking its stand on the observed constancy of nature, it can reconstruct the past and predict the future. It can talk of eclipses and conjunctions of the planets five hundred years ago or five hundred years to come. So it can reconstruct history, or discover and explode ancient errors in philosophy, religion, and science. So, with astonishing accuracy, it can foresee the issues of our present political and religious tendencies. And, if the world be wise, it will use its light in guiding and shaping the forces now at work so as to determine a better future for man.

It is apparent, then, that science is only organized common sense. It is only man rationally trying to rid himself of his errors and to find out what is true in every department of thought and life. It is man in the light of past experience trying not to repeat his blunders, but to find out the reality of things, so that he may rightly adjust himself to them. Science never destroyed a fact or discredited a truth; and it never will. Those who are afraid of it only reveal their lack of knowledge as to what it is, or else their distrust as to the soundness of their own positions. Its only office is to clarify the present of its errors inherited from an uncritical and unscientific past, and to go on to new conquests of the undiscovered.

We have come now face to face with a question that is central to our whole discussion. On account of its importance, it has a right to ask your most careful attention. When may any institution be said to have a scientific basis? There can be but one answer; though it seems to me that people hold the most confused and absurd notions about it. An institution has a scientific basis, when the thoughts, the emotions, the rites or customs, and the actions involved in it are found to accord with the scientifically ascertained nature of things. And any institution, being a fact, has a prescriptive right to exist until by the use of the scientific method it is proved not to be in accord with the nature of things. That is, science has no right to demand the surrender or abolition of all things that do not happen as yet to have been demonstrated. He would not be an over-wise man who should propose incontinently to pull down all houses whose foundations are not already proved to be secure. When he has carefully examined and proved, in the case of some particular one, that it is not secure, then is the time for his work of demolition to begin. But there is a certain class of dynamite scientists who propose to blow everything up first, and examine them afterward.

One other point needs to be made clear; that is, the range, the scope of science, or the proper field for scientific investigation. There are many who would say to Science, Your instruments and methods of investigation are the proper ones for certain departments of study or life; but, by the very nature of things, they are excluded from others. Some self-appointed keepers of certain alleged truths would say, Hands off! my realm is too sacred or too subtle for science to deal with. Others—and these perhaps among men of science themselves—are ready to pronounce certain departments of thought or life unreal, because they do not lend themselves to the cruder methods of research with which they happen to be familiar. But we all need to learn, once and for all, that whatever is true, and at the same time touches in any way the life of humanity, is capable of being scientifically investigated. Undoubtedly there may be many things true in distant parts of the universe, or even near at hand, that do not touch human life, and so do not concern us. For example, perhaps we shall never find out very much about the back of the moon; and perhaps it will not trouble us much, if we do not. Perhaps there are inhabited

worlds whose suns even are beyond the range of our largest telescopes; and perhaps we shall never know much about such worlds. But if a thing does not touch, and so does not influence or modify, our lives in any way, it is no matter whether we know about it or not. The things, then, that are beyond our reach and so beyond our knowledge are the things that it does not concern us to know. But whatever does touch us is thereby proved to be within our reach; and all such things we can investigate by scientific methods.

Science has achieved its most dramatic triumphs, so far, in the field of material facts; and I suppose it is on that account that many set up the claim that it ought to confine itself to these, and that nothing else is real. But, though there is about them none of the characteristics or qualities that we associate with what we call matter, a feeling, a flitting fancy, or even a dream, is a fact as much as a boulder, a glacier, or the remains of a megatherium. As a fact, it must be dealt with and accounted for by any one who undertakes to set up a comprehensive theory of the world. What we call the emotional, the mental, the spiritual,—the whole psychical life of man,—these are facts. The inclinations that constitute the bonds of society are facts. Because they are immensely more difficult to deal with than physical facts does not put them beyond the range of science, nor absolve science from the necessity of dealing with them. There is no other possible alternative: either all things are orderly—that is, under law—or else the universe is a mad-house. And whatever is under law, and that at the same time touches and so concerns us,—this can be investigated.

The outcome of our definition of science, then, is this: 1. It is a method, and not a thing. 2. Its scope includes all that it concerns us to know. 3. By any thing's having a scientific basis, we mean that it is found, on investigation, to be in accord with the discovered nature of things.

Now let us turn to the other great factor of our theme, and ask,

II. What is Religion?

In general, then, and before coming to particulars, I would define religion as man's effort to express and interpret the greatest and most inclusive of all human relations. And, in the nature of things, it must be as permanent as that relation itself. Or, to state it in another form, so as to open the way for a natural and needed analysis, I would say, Religion is man's thought concerning the relation in which he stands to the universe, or to the powers or power that he recognizes as outside himself and as controlling his destiny. Of course, his thought is accompanied by appropriate emotions. And, of course, the thought and the emotion will find external expression in what are regarded as fitting rites, services, and courses of conduct; while the one purpose in it all will be the establishment of what is looked upon as desirable relations between man and this external power.

I put the thought first, because an intellectual perception of this relation must precede all conscious feeling on the subject; while the thought and the feeling must precede the external expression in altars, temples, or services of any kind. The purpose—which is the motive force of it all—will be seen to permeate, run through, and mingle with all the other elements of religion.

Religion, then, upon analysis, may be resolved into these four elements:—

1. It is thought,—the creed, the theology.

2. It is emotion,—fear, awe, reverence, hope, love, worship.

3. It is ritual, however elaborate or however simple it may be.

4. It is purpose,—the endeavor of man to adjust himself to his supposed environment; to get into right relation to the Power not himself; or, in New Testament phrase, to become "reconciled to God."

To see how true and real this all is, let us glance at a few concrete illustrations drawn from the different religions of the world. Begin with a fetich worshipper. In some way,—no matter how,—he has come to stand in awe of some mysterious power supposed to reside in or be connected with a stick or a curious stone. Now, he thinks of a power here, external to himself, and as able in some way to hurt or help him. He will naturally feel

afraid of this power. Then, by some rite or ceremony, an offering or a prayer, he will try to placate its anger or win its good will. And his purpose will be, in it all, to establish what he regards as desirable relations with it.

Pass from the fetich worshipper to the Jewish high priest in Solomon's temple. His thought of the power not himself has grown to the dimensions of Jehovah, the God of Israel, or, as in later times, the God of the whole earth. His emotions will correspond to his intellectual conception. His ritual will take such shape as he supposes his god to desire. And his purpose will be the establishment of what are regarded as desirable relations with this dread Power that is supposed to hold the destiny of Israel in his hands.

Now, precisely similar things are true of the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, and the Christian.

And, even if you drop the name of religion, you do not escape the thing itself. Every man capable of thinking does think and must think of a power external to himself. If capable of emotion, he must have feelings that respond to the manifestations of this power. By his thoughts and feelings, his actions must be influenced and moulded. And, knowing that his life, his prosperity and happiness, depend on his knowledge of and obedience to this power, the purpose to be rightly adjusted to it must be the aim of every intelligent and sane human being. For this religious search is nothing more nor less than the search for the secret of life. The essentials of religion, then, are the essentials of all sane and healthy human living. The same religious elements that we discovered in the fetich worshipper are vital to-day in Huxley, in Herbert Spencer, in Haeckel, and in Colonel Ingersoll. Even atheism itself is only the obverse side of the current coin of religion. And these essentials of religion must remain just so long as there is a universe, and a man in it capable of thinking and feeling about it. Get rid of all the temples, churches, priests, and ministers, and you would not get rid of religion any more than, by abolishing the weather bureau at Washington and destroying all the weather-vanes and thermometers, you would get rid of the weather. And, even if the climates themselves should all change, some kind of climatic conditions would remain.

It seems to me that, in this matter, people allow themselves to be deluded by superficial appearances. Because a large part of any old religion will not bear scientific investigation does not seriously threaten religion itself any more than the stars were endangered by the overthrow of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. That the thought elements, the emotional elements, and the ritualistic elements of religion in the past should have been erroneous or partial is a matter of course, and goes without saying. For a scientific man to discover and announce these facts should startle no one, any more than the statement parallel to this, and equally profound, that a boy's trousers and jacket are not large enough for him when he gets to be a man. It is doubtless true, but not important enough to make a great deal of fuss about. Put a finite being in the midst of an infinite universe and tell him to grow, and results like these are to be expected. And they are as inevitable in regard to religion as they are in the matter of clothes. Our religious beliefs, like all the rest of our ideas, may always be partially untrue; and they must always be at least inadequate. And yet they may be relatively right enough at any special stage of human development. I suppose that, at any particular epoch of the world's advance, the people then living did just what we are doing now. That is, they thought as correctly as their brain power, limited by tradition and inherited prejudice, would let them. To ask them to do more would be like asking the Swiss lake-dwellers to build the Parthenon.

But while the creed, the emotion, and the ritual are subject to perpetual change and growth, the purpose remains forever the same. The body may grow old and die; but the soul ever reincarnates itself in some more fitting form. Orders and types of life perish; but life goes on. And this eternal purpose of religion is one of reconciliation. It is the progres-

sive endeavor to reconcile man with himself, man with his fellow, and man with the external conditions of his life.

III. Where are We Now?

Let us now look a little at the condition of religion at this present stage of the world's advance. We will do this with two questions in mind: first, as to what religious principles or beliefs have a distinct and definite scientific basis; and, secondly, as to what principles or beliefs, though not yet demonstrated to be true, have a right to remain,—for the present, at least,—because they have not been demonstrated to be false.

What, then, are some of the elements of religion—truths that may well enough be called doctrines—that are capable of demonstration?

1. I would set down the existence of "an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." This is as much more certain than any phenomenal fact whatever as is the general fact of seeing more certain than anybody's report of any particular thing stated to have been seen.

For my present purpose, I care not by what name you call this Power, or, indeed, whether you name it at all; for any finite name must be utterly inadequate as a designation of the infinite.

But, unless Science is to stultify herself and deny her own essential postulates, she must admit that "nothing comes from nothing," and that "a stream cannot rise higher than its source." If, then, I may not talk of this Power as thinking or planning or loving or as personal—because all these are finite terms—still, by all the canons of science, I am bound to regard it as at least equal and adequate to these; for these are some of its finite manifestations. This Power, then, is at least as much as we mean by intelligence and love and personality. Or, as Herbert Spencer said to me one day, "I see no reason why we should not regard this Power as being as much above personality as we are higher than vegetable growths."

And I, for one, see no good reason for our being so afraid of being anthropomorphic. Whether afraid of it or not, we must be anthropomorphic until we cease to be *anthropoi*, men. And, if we were anything else, we should still be limited to the standpoint of our natures, whatever they were. We are just as anthropomorphic in chemistry as we are in theology. So long as we speak at all, we must use terms derived from our own experience. And even a partial expression may be more nearly correct than silence or no expression at all. And it is just as possible for one to be negatively dogmatic as to be positively so; and the former may be even farther from the truth than the latter. He who asserts mere force may be as dogmatic as he who asserts God. He cannot prove that he is any more nearly accurate. And, if he tells the theist that he does not know what God is, the theist has a perfect right to retort that he does not know what force is.

This Power, then, is not only real, it is the one great reality.

2. Man is the product of, and is dependent on, this Power. If, then, one grand element of religion is "the sense of dependence on an unseen Power," as it has been called, then, in so far, it has abundant scientific justification.

3. In this infinite and eternal Power is the law of man's life. This law was here before man came, and it will be here after he departs. In entering life, he comes under its jurisdiction. This sense of being amenable to a higher law has always been an essential part of every religion. It is no necessary part of this truth that this law should always have been looked upon as what would now be called good, or moral. It is enough that he should always have regarded himself as subject to a Power above him that demanded his allegiance, and attached to his conduct or character reward or punishment as the result of obedience or disobedience.

This belief, instead of being weakened by the advance of science, is now established as one of the most incontrovertible of all truths.

4. In this fact, that the laws of this infinite Power are the inexorable conditions of life and death for man, lies the mightiest conceivable motive force for conduct. To know and obey these laws is at

once the only true self-interest and the highest duty.

5. These laws, discovered and verified, constitute the one book, the sacred Scripture. And, while Science is calling them the "laws of nature," I see no reason why Religion should not call them the "word of God," written on "tablets of stone," and on the "fleshy tablets of the heart," by the very finger of the Highest.

6. On the emotional side, the teachings of modern science seem to me to furnish unspeakably grander occasions than were ever known before for the feelings of reverence, awe, humility, admiration, and all the nobler emotions that have always been associated with the attitude of worship. Indeed, take the worshipful element out of human nature, and the very noblest attribute of manhood is gone.

7. All rituals; all services that are living expressions of live thoughts and feelings; all that serve to teach, to impress, to inspire, to lead to righteousness (rightness) of thought or life,—find ample warrant in the light of the best knowledge of the modern world. Indeed, so far as they are efficacious in these directions, they are the most important of all occupations. The highest and most important use of this world is the development of a noble man. All that science is worth is to serve as a torch in his hand to show him where to walk. The most of that which passes under the name of science to-day is of a very subordinate value as compared with that which shall teach him how he ought to feel, and conduct himself, as a man.

8. I fail to see, then, what Science can have to say against the Church as a permanent institution. It may undermine and overthrow, if it pleases, any number of false or partial theories as to the Church's origin, nature, prerogatives, or powers. But against the Church as a voluntary organization of men and women seeking to find the art of true living and to help others find it, in its endeavors to study and practice the best religious life, a sensible science can raise no objection that would not be equally valid against an art association or a scientific society; while the aim of the true Church is as much more important than either of these as life itself is more important than its embellishments or assistants.

9. The actual history of the past shows fear and hate decreasing and love and trust increasing; and this both in relation to man and also as toward the Power manifested in the external world. This, being exactly in line with the great, distinctive work of religion,—which is one of reconciliation, — reveals a demonstrable and demonstrated ground for her noblest expectations; and it also shows that those expectations are being progressively realized.

10. On the basis of the past there is laid a solid foundation of fact on which Religion is justified in building her loftiest structures of hope. Since the laws of this universe are now known to be the laws of human life, prosperity, and progress, it is seen that what Religion has called "the kingdom of God" is identical with what scientific philanthropy would call "the kingdom of man." In the light of modern knowledge, we are justified in hoping for such a kingdom here on earth. This is one of the great hopes of Religion. It is the natural and necessary outcome of her work of reconciliation and adjustment, which — however wisely or unwisely sought—is her universal and eternal purpose.

But she cherishes one other hope. And this hope is so paradoxical, so audacious, so magnificent, that the mere fact of its being cherished at all, if untrue, is almost more wonderful than that it should be true. Almost every religion in the world has confidently promised even its humblest adherents that they should somehow successfully overleap the apparently bottomless chasm of death, and, dowered with immortal youth, start out on a career of eternal life.

This practically universal hope is a fact as real as a granite cliff. It is a product of this universe, on any theory you choose to hold. In some way, science must deal with it.

Suppose we start with the picture of human life so pessimistically pictured by the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam,—

"Into this universe, and *why* not knowing,
Nor *whence*, like water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as wind along the waste,
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing."

Now, if man be only that, a pinch of dust caught by a passing wind and whirled into fantastic form for a moment, only to be scattered again aimlessly to the waste, —on that theory, how did it happen that he took up with this most stupendous lie, whispered to him by a universe more crazy than himself? They tell us that dream and trance and subjective vision will account for it. Perhaps; but who who will account for the dream, the trance, the subjective vision? All that is only covering a mystery with a phrase. It is only a stake set up by wise men to mark the boundary lines of their ignorance.

It may be true that the Power manifested in the universe blows sun and planets and moons like soap-bubbles, only that they may swell and glitter and burst, all unmindful of the intensity of human love and hope or the intensity of fear and despair. But, if so, then it must be Hartmann's "Unconscious" or Jonathan Edwards' "Devil." But, in that case, who knows that he can rely on the reason that comes to such conclusions? In a universe like that, reason itself may be either meaningless or only one of a devil's freaks of fancy. But, until we get something better, perhaps the most rational way is to rely on reason. On any theory, reason is a product of the universe. The universe, then, must be as much, as high, as reason. If, then, the conclusions of reason are valid, there must be an outcome of this world-drama great enough and good enough to justify the process. An age-long progress that ends in "a hole in the ground" does not seem to me quite worthy of a Power capable of building the world for a stage, curtaining it with clouds, doming it with the sky, and lighting it with stars. A cheaper play-house would have been good enough for so pitiful a tragedy or so poor a farce. For one,

> I cannot think this world will end in naught,
> That the abyss shall be the grave of thought;
>
> That e'er oblivion's shoreless sea shall roll
> O'er love and wonder and the lifeless soul.

I do not claim on behalf of this hope of continued existence that it has as yet a demonstrable scientific basis. But I do claim that, for anything Science can say to the contrary, Religion has a clear and rational right to cherish the hope. The hope is a fact; it exists; and no knowledge, ancient or modern, is capable of proving it to be unfounded. It is not only a rational hope, but, on the supposition that the universe means anything, it is more rational than the opposite. If any man tells me that he does not want a future life, I will tell him in return that I do. If Mr. Frederic Harrison says I am selfish in wanting it, my reply is that logically he ought at once to commit suicide. For, if it is selfish to wish to be alive a hundred years from to-day, then it is also selfish to wish to be alive next week. The only difference is that my selfishness asks for a little larger quantity of that which both of us desire.

Where, then, do we stand at the outcome of our discussion? We have found that religion is here, and that it is a world-wide and age-long fact. In studying the nature of that fact, we have discovered it to be only man's attempt to express and perfect an eternal relation,—a relation that inheres in the very nature of the universe and of man. The changes that have taken place in the past are only the natural results of a better understanding of that relation. Should the time ever come when, through increasing knowledge and goodness, these relations should be instinctively and automatically maintained, and all outward institutions of religion be no longer needed, this even would not be the destruction of religion, but its perfection. Education is not abolished, when a man has learned all that the schools can teach, and has ceased to attend them. The essential thing in government is the securing justice and order. Should the time ever come when this became a wholly internal thing, and outward laws and officials were not needed, would government have ceased? Because there is no visible Supreme Court to lay down the law for the planets, is there no law or order among the heavenly bodies? So the essence of religion being its purpose to secure this perfect reconciliation, it can be lost to sight only in its own perfect realization.

And what is our last word about science? Being as it is only a method of study, the way to the investigation of

truth, its highest office can only be to make a pathway for human advancement, and hold the torch by which we may see our road. And since religion is, at any special stage of the world's growth, man's best endeavor to give body and form to that which is the highest object of human concern,—the art of life itself,—it follows that the noblest office of science must be to serve as the helper of religion.

Humanity progressing may be likened to a train of cars *en route*. The religious motive—the hunger for life, for life larger and fuller—is the steam in the engine. Science teaches man how to survey and build the road, and then places her torch of truth for a head-light to shine out over the track that leads on toward the future.

Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

The word "UNITY" in the title bears to the Committee who arrange the series a wide meaning, pointing more to the substance, than to the forms, of religious thought and faith; and in inviting contributions they have sought, not only through the whole range, but in both directions beyond the range, of those who bear the "Unitarian" name,—though most of the writers must naturally be found within that name. "New Orthodoxy," "New Judaism," those who care for no name but "Religion," and the "Ethical Societies," will all be represented. The choice of subject is left to the writers; and *each writer is responsible for his own utterance alone, and for nothing else in the series.* "One of your best—a life-helping sermon, or a thought-sermon reaching the life," was the invitation sent out.

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